

Eastern MRS Meeting  
Greene County DSS  
March 30, 2006

Counties Present: Bladen, Brunswick, Duplin, Edgecombe, Franklin, Gates, Greene, Harnett, Johnston, Lenoir, Orange, Nash, Sampson, Tyrrell, Wayne, Wilson.

Community Partners:

Methodist Home for Children (IFPS, Family Preservation, Reunification)  
Martin County Community Action (IFPS, Reunification)

Training Update

Cornerstone III  
Policy Training

Introductions

Who  
Where  
What  
Collaborative Efforts

Training Update

- As of April 15<sup>th</sup> Cornerstone 3 will be blended. DSS has worked to blend the two so there is one training. The first 2 days were the same anyway. The practice day was the one that was different. To blend these, AFI has made a self study guide to ensure that you will know what you need to know and have some practice still at the training. Courtney said there will be some homework assignments so that they can maximize the training experience, so people should be prepared. And, don't expect the attendees to go to training and then go to work at 4pm!! The homework is short (45 mins) but they will need to do it. If you have been to 3B and you now realize that you really need 3A because you are going to be doing family assessments, you can use the self study guide and not have to go to this training again (will still need MRS policy training). Self study guide on the web.

Policy training dates:

- 5/3 Rowan
- 5/9 Black Mtn Library
- 5/10 - Edgecombe Co (getting full, may add one more, but not for sure)
- If you want to go just call Holly and give her a number of participants so she has enough training materials. These are the last policy trainings that are planned for some time. Hope to have Cornerstone blended into Pre-Service by the end of the calendar year. If anyone thinks you will need more, let Holly know ASAP.

#### April Meeting dates

4/21 Lenoir Co

4/25 Henderson Co

4/26 Cabarrus Co

4/28 Alamance original 10 meeting

#### Lets Talk Collaboration

Edgecombe works with the FRC for Child Only WF cases, making an effort to collaborate within the agency to provide a holistic approach to working with families; when a customer comes in and asks for any kind of assistance they look at the overall issues and services that they are already getting to see if there is anything that they could benefit from that they do not already know about and to reduce duplication. WF sit in on CPS staffings. Trying very hard to pull in the school social workers. Have tried to identify a couple of individual workers and work with them first.

Harnett monthly meetings with Mental Health, managed to do this by making a personal connection with one person and that enables the meeting to happen. If applicable WF comes to these meetings as well. Meet with community partners as well.

Wayne collaborate with military on base, so far they feel positive about MRS. Also collaborating with Probation services.

Tyrrell small county that they all work together as a regular thing, they all know all the families.

Duplin beginning stages, have interagency exchange forms. Keep updated client lists and exchange them between CPS and WF.

Sampson at this point the CPS workers and WF workers don't know each other but they are making progress, the supervisors have a good relationship and feel good about the direction they are going in. (CPS and WF are 4 miles apart.)

Martin County Community Action IFPS, Reunification, Adoption Promotion and Support collaborate with JJ, DSS, and MH because those are their referral sources.

Onslow WF is several miles away but they have started to get much closer. They cross check clients when they get a new report or WF gets a new application.

Nash use CFTs to bring folks together, talk to WF if common clients. Have a protocol for checking to see if an individual is a common client when a report

comes in. Find it helpful because each side gets different information from the family. Have also been collaborating with Law Enforcement and the Health Department because of some recent abandoned babies, as a result they are going to do billboards on Safe Surrender.

Wilson WF shares their money with CPS. CPS comes to Success meetings, WF goes to CFT when the family is involved with both. WF is going to start doing home studies for Juvenile Court cases and kinship care cases. Do joint home visits because the relationships with the different social workers are very different and can help to have the WF worker introduce the CPS worker.

Greene WF training for family assessments.

Johnston CPS comes to Success team meetings, they staff cases there. Make sure that the services they are providing and what they are requiring from the family are in sync. When one of them (CPS or WF) networks with community partners, they try to be sure to make sure that the contact mentions and involves both areas of the DSS so they don't have to duplicate these contacts.

Gates small county so collaboration with everyone. Have a family resource center that they worked closely with. If there is a family that gets a CPS call that is already involved with WF, the WF worker does the family assessment.

Methodist Home IFPS, Reunification works closely with DSS and schools. Collaborate with anyone that will talk to them.

Bladen Has a System of Care grant. On the state collaborative which is working on a cross agency CFT protocol so that no matter what agency is hosting the meeting they will be similar. Has offered trainings to all agencies in her county on collaboration, stressing that collaboration is not just with agencies, but with the families. One of the original 10. People are calling them now wanting to join their collaborative efforts.

Lenoir have gone to speak with many community agencies about MRS. Have contacted them and asked if they can be added to their agenda for meetings that are already scheduled for those agencies.

Franklin CFTs

Brunswick very little overlap of CPS and WF cases but they do check. Most successful collaboration is with DA's office (with whom they have a monthly meeting) and Law Enforcement. Rare that they do a forensic interview without law enforcement going along or at least having their input. When law enforcement goes out they have given CPS a heads up. About to try having a social worker in the courthouse.

### Questions from things people have said?

How many counties have the WF team under the same program manager as child welfare: Nash, Gates, Johnston

Is that new or was it already that way? Already that way.

2 counties said WF SW will take family assessments if they come in on a family that already has an open WF case Gates, Greene, Wilson considering it.

Work First comment:

- The reality is that work first has been doing family assessments forever, that is how they have to do their work anyway, they just don't have the initial CPS report behind it, and they don't call it the same thing. There is no state work first training, so a county asked how is the best way for their CPS workers to learn about work first? Holly said since work first differs so much from county to county, to get the best benefit from it, the cross training needs to be done on a local level. WF person said that she felt like since WF was moved under Child Welfare there are no conferences, etc. and their used to be programs for them. Now all the training opportunities require pre-service, and WF people often can't get into that. State needs to offer something for the WF side.

What kinds of training would WF like to see? Family centered practice, case management, family assessment.

### Family Centered Practice

- Bladen sent their whole agency to family centered practice. They keep it going with lunch and learns and keeping the principles alive by having them posted. They have boxes for clients and staff to put notes in when they thought the principles worked, and when they didn't.
- Has to start with the Director and sometimes staff can help the Director put this into focus.
- The stakeholders group that Candice is on heard that the families want to be a part of the process from the very beginning, not just at CFTs. They want to be there from the time that the policy is being developed. So, they are going to start that. Have had a policy meeting on Safe Surrender and there was a parent who adopted a Safe Surrender baby.

What can DSS do to support Community Partners?

- If the SW gets new information about a family while IFPS is ongoing, or plans a meeting with that family, be sure to include the IFPS worker or pass that new information along.

How can State help CPS and WF collaborate with each other better?

- The state needs to collaborate better in Raleigh because it can't trickle down to counties if it is not happening in Raleigh. They will here stuff at statewide collaborative meetings and then go back to their counties and find out the local head of DPI or another agency knows nothing about what was talked about at that meeting. (Not CPS and WF, but DSS and other agencies, like Department of Public Instruction, etc.)

How can CPS help WF?

- Realize that it has to work both ways and we often talk about what WF can do for CPS, but not vice versa.
- At the pre-service level, they don't talk about WF. One of the WF people just went to pre-service and she doesn't think WF would have been touched on if she had not been there. Even if it is having a WF person come for one hour of the whole training, just to make new SW think about WF from the beginning and realize that the WF workers are a resource that they need to have.

Each county has to look at their own Work First county plan because they are different for each county. Look at that plan and see what WF is designated to do in your county.

Communication is the key. Look at the individual families that they are working with and make sure that the plans are complementary and that there hasn't been areas overlooked that the families can benefit from.

MRS can be really beneficial for child only cases. After the CPS case is closed and the child is placed with a relative then often times it used to go to an income maintenance worker and no one was doing anything but checking in once a year with this family. That family still needs services. (Otherwise generally in a couple more years there will probably be another CPS report.)

People expressed concerns with the fact that relative placements get so much less money than foster parents. And this funding is being more restricted. What can we do as this group? Talk to people in Raleigh and Washington. You have to make the Director understand and get it on his radar.

What things does the group want Holly to talk to Jo Ann about?

Training for Work First

- work first 101 kind of overview (more in depth than at the MRS training institute that was too much in too short a time)
- Include WF in pre-service.

Have a way for WF to learn about CPS also. We can work on it at the state but we are more slow moving, Holly asked how can they do it at the county level?

- Send their workers to pre-service, but they have a person in their county that is certified to do the pre-service in the county. WF person presents at each training session. (can't recall which county this was)
- Has to be more than she works down the hall have to establish relationships. People will say that don't have time to be social they are too busy. But a short investment in an up front meeting will pay off in the long run because workers will save time.
- Tyrrell small county and they are right there, but they really have to make an effort to schedule the time. They will get together in the morning and look at each other's schedules and find some time and set a meeting with each other. The meeting is casual, but formally putting it on their schedules allows them to know they will have the time.
- Tony Amos suggested having power point presentation because you can save them and update them as things change. This won't get the personal connection, but it gives a good overview to use as an introduction.
- Bladen county's box for clients and staff to recognize when the principles of family centered practice were followed and when they were not. They recognize the person's who did follow the principles, and if there are concerns they are addressed as concerns for the agency as a whole. They have had clients send their social worker flowers before just as a thank you for going above and beyond.
- One county has a training session once a week and each time it is on a different topic, and they have kept MRS issues at the forefront of these topics. (IF they are training on food stamps, how does MRS play into this.)
- Could the state provide Family Centered training for all Work First staff? State can work on what we can, but there is not enough money to train every DSS employee, so counties will have to figure out some way to train some of their other workers.
- Using the Training Notes and MRS newsletter.
- Confidentiality sometimes people get worried and don't share within agency. Could the state provide some guidelines? Higher than the WF Reps and CPR like a Dear County Director letter. Let them know that one agency and they not only can share information, they are supposed to! Don't share gossip, and WF can't have access to Central Registry, but otherwise, can share.

How many WF programs are blended caseloads?

Tyrrell, Wilson, Harnett, Duplin are blended so that the same worker does eligibility and employment services.

Pros: one worker, communication with Medicaid and Food Stamps better because coming from one person, do a universal assessment on that family, more streamlined, reduces chances for missing something that could help the family. There was resistance to the process at first, but works well now. Have an

orientation for customers that they must attend before applying. One county has the WF people doing the home visits, one does not.

What are barriers to that? The eligibility piece is very time consuming.

CPS WF joint visits whole visit gets off to a better start because the family has a relationship with the WF person. They feel that they are supported by the presence of the WF worker who they already know. Also client can't keep some information from the CPS worker and play the workers against each other if they are both there. The CPS workers who have seen the benefits of this now seek out WF workers and arrange visits so that they can go with them.

Have started sending a Day Care worker out on a site visit if the CPS worker thinks that the family could use that, so the family benefits because the Day Care worker comes to them with the application and can talk about it with them without the family having to navigate to get to the worker.